

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior revisions and listings of claims in the subject application, and please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1. (original): A method of making an ePTFE tubular structure comprising the following steps: forming a tube of polytetrafluoroethylene;

longitudinally stretching said polytetrafluoroethylene tube to form an expanded polytetrafluoroethylene tube, wherein said expanded polytetrafluoroethylene tube is comprised of fibrils oriented in a longitudinal direction of said tube and nodes oriented in a circumferential direction of said tube; and

placing the expanded polytetrafluoroethylene tube circumferentially exterior to a longitudinal foreshortening and radially expanding mechanism, wherein radial pressure from said foreshortening mechanism radially expands said ePTFE tubular structure and reorients said fibrils non-longitudinally.

Claim 2. (original): The method according to claim 1 wherein said ePTFE tube is heated to a temperature of between about 86°F and 650°F during radial expansion.

Claim 3. (original): The method according to claim 2 wherein said reoriented fibrils are hingeably rotated about said nodes.

Claim 4. (original): The method accordingly to claim 1 wherein said ePTFE tubular structure exhibits increased longitudinal elongation and radial expansion and recovery properties.

Claim 5. (original): The method according to claim 1 wherein said reoriented fibrils are substantially the same length of said originally longitudinally oriented fibrils.

Claim 6. (original): The method according to claim 4 wherein said tubular structure is capable of being longitudinally elongated to at least about 1.5 times its original length.

Claim 7. (original): The method according to claim 6 wherein said tubular structure is capable of being elongated to at least about 2.0 times its original length.

Claim 8. (original): The method according to claim 7 wherein said tubular structure is capable of being longitudinally expanded to at least about 2.5 times its original length.

Claim 9. (currently amended): The method according to claim 4 wherein said tubular structure is capable of ~~readily~~ radially expanded to at least about 1.5 times its original radius.

Claim 10. (currently amended): The method according to claim 9 wherein said tubular structure is capable of ~~regularly~~ radially expanded to at least about 2.0 times its original radius.

Claim 11. (original): The method according to claim 10 wherein said tubular structure is capable of radially expanded to at least about 2.5 times its original radius.

Claim 12. (original): The method according to claim 4 wherein said tubular structure exhibits said recovery properties in the absence of elastic recovery.

Claim 13. (original): The method according to claim 1 wherein said nodes have a first length after said longitudinal stretching and a second length after said radial pressure, wherein said second length is greater than said first length.

Claim 14. (original): The method according to claim 1 further including a step of suspending and heating said PTFE tube after longitudinal expansion and prior to placing said tube on said expanding mechanism.

Applicant: Sowinski et al.
Application No.: 10/776,576
Docket No.: 760-102 DIV
Page 5

Claim 15. (original): The method according to claim 14 wherein said heating step increases structural integrity of said ePTFE tubular structure.